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NATIONAL DESTINY

AND

OUR COUNTRY.

BY

REV. D. F. ROBERTSON.

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NATIONAL DESTINY

AND

OUR COUNTRY.

A DISCOURSE,

BY

REV. D. F. ROBERTSON.

NEW YORK:
E. FRENCH, 135 NASSAU STREET.
1851.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Discourse was first delivered in Rev. Dr. Spring's Church, and, subsequently, in the Broadway Tabernacle, and in the R. D. Church on Lafayette Place.

Several persons, then, desired its publication; but aside from hesitations as to its general utility, other callings then more important, and more imperative, prevented its issue.

Some paragraphs here and there, have been added—some of which will be readily distinguished as not appropriate to the pulpit. In publishing it now, with many imperfections, the writer is yielding to the opinions of others—especially to the requests of a gentleman who now desires to have it, at some trouble and expense to himself.

He would be laying himself liable to be placed in a false position, if he failed to state here, that a person who borrowed the manuscript has published some portions of it over his own name; and has thereby manifested a great failing in matters of taste (not to mention things ethical), in appropriating from another that which—as in the present instance—is inferior to what he could have produced himself.

Note.—The intelligent reader will perceive that the *certain* dissolution of our Government and Institutions, or their *certain* perpetuity, is not asserted in this Discourse.

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DISCOURSE.

ISAIAH LXIV. 6.

WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF; AND OUR INIQUITIES, LIKE THE WIND, HAVE TAKEN US AWAY.

THE Prophet Isaiah, looking down the course of time, beholds, afar off, in the visions of prophecy, the terrible ruin of the kingdom of Judah, the forlorn and desperate condition of the guilty inhabitants.

The startling events described, were not to take place till many years after he should be gathered to his fathers; yet they are mentioned, here, in the *present* tense—in the simple, sententious, glowing style often assumed in prophetic composition. The predicted scenery, in all its dismal detail, passes before his eyes; and the deep, intense emotion, kindled at the sight, bursts forth in this simplest form of the verb, portraying most vividly the dread impending desolation.

It is pertinent, here, to observe that this mode of expression—employing the present tense to indicate *future* events—is of frequent occurrence in the prophetic Scriptures. Would the holy prophet foretell that Messiah would suffer in innocence, patience and silence? He speaks of the event as *present* to his mind, and exclaims, "He *is led* as a lamb to the slaughter"—not *shall be led;* though the event was, as yet, some seven hundred years in the future.

This species of style, which is an excellence rather than a de-

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fect, is not peculiar to the sacred poets. It often obtains in the finest periods of secular poetry ; and the most erudite historians often throw a past or a future tense into the *present* to give life and force to their narratives.

Unhappily, we have, just now, amongst us, a very injurious order of Biblical critics—cold, captious and minute—who are ever in trouble about these and similar passages in the Word of God; who spend their days in frivolous and bewildering solicitude over the most inconsiderable distinctions pertaining to the mere "letter" or incidents of Revelation. They would clip the wings of inspired Genius and bid her creep upon the dust at their own dull, plodding pace. They would silence her voice, did she decline to announce her oracles in their own little, precise phraseology. To such the *whole* destiny of Christianity often seems to turn upon the specific rendering of some small phrase—some philological point or accent (important in itself and as an incident), or perchance, on some appalling discrepancy between the inches of lava at the base of a volcano, and the very minute of time when the human race arose into being and dwelt in shady borders in the garden of Paradise!

To such idle and absurd calculations and criticisms, such vain, petty punctilio, the celestial muses deign not to condescend. Though every passage in the sacred canon, when cautiously and fully interpreted, will *ever* be found to coincide with every sober and faithful generalization of new facts, whether these facts pertain to the discoveries of natural science, to the proper interpretation of language, or to any subject—mental or material—within the limits of things created—the remotest points of space, or periods of time to which the human mind could ever rise even in its conceptions.

The passage now before us cannot be perceived in its full intent, until the mind is set free from these puerilities of small critics, and brought back to its natural position, where, alone, the beauty and grandeur of this prophecy may meet the eye and arouse the soul.

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If you would, then, approach the startling import of the text, attend simply to the simple figure here introduced: "We all do fade"—we, the kingdom of Judah, do fade—"as a leaf, and our (national) iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." The leaf of a tree or plant is presented as the emblem of his country. It is a fading leaf, trembling in the chilling winds. The air of autumn has breathed decay upon its verdant beauty. No more it drinks the evening dews; no more it greets the smiling beams of early, joyous light. The frosts and the snows of winter—the storm and the tempest are bent upon its ruin. See that leaf, as it struggles in vain on the verge of dissolution, grasping faintly in its frail fibres the shrinking stem that gave it birth, till the last fatal blast *sweeps it "away."* Then, behold the kingdom of Judah soaring high far above all the nations of the earth, smiling with upward bent in the noontide of Jehovah's love, till, at last, cankered and cursed, turning its face from God, it is torn away in violence, and drifted into Babylon in a whirlwind of the Divine indignation.

Following, then, this the strict sense of these words, we shall,

I. Briefly contemplate the Prosperity, the Popular Vices, and the Fading away of the Hebrew Nation.

II. Illustrate, somewhat, the identity of the great general Laws which controlled the Hebrew Destiny, with those that have ever operated vitally in the real Rise and Decay of other Nations.

III. Endeavor to indicate several Elements of Decay in the existing Institutions of our own Country, with certain leading Remedies.

I. Briefly contemplate the Prosperity, the Popular Vices, and the Fading away of the Hebrew Nation.

In reaching the true idea of national prosperity, it must be assumed that a people are really prosperous in proportion to their knowledge and sense of the true God, and to their constant

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cherishing the institutes he has vouchsafed for their attainment of the highest excellence.

In the dispensations of the Almighty we discover no *arbitrary* bestowal of prosperity upon *any* people. He dispenses his highest blessings to the nations that know most of Him, and whose institutions have the highest aim. This is a pervading principle in the Divine administration, losing itself beyond the human vision only in that mysterious sovereignty which every reasoning being must recognize, and by which the Omniscience gives or withholds the full knowledge and sense of Himself to one nation rather than to another.

Unless we are prepared to dispute the simplest truisms in morality that have obtained among all enlightened communities in every age—unless we are to stifle the deep, prevailing convictions that cry out in every human bosom for the *eternal* distinction between virtue and vice,—we must acknowledge that the Almighty, "who giveth to *all* liberally," hath favorably distinguished this great people from millions of mankind.

Hath He not conferred upon me higher favors than upon the poor, wretched troglodyte who feeds on reptiles, and seeks the hollow rocks to find a shelter from the murderous weapons of his kindred and friends? He who will not see that God has bestowed higher favors on New England than on New Holland, has simply lost his moral sense, and with this, all claim, save for our sympathy, upon our attention on a subject of this nature.

We say, then, that the same general law characterizing the divine action upon the different and opposite economies of *modern* nations, is especially observable in the case of the Hebrew people.

We see the divine choice falling upon a single man and his descendants. This choice was not arbitrary. The personal excellences of Abraham, so far as we are informed, were higher than those of any other man then living. And though it cannot be denied that Abraham had, antecedently to his "call," been "made to differ" by an act of grace altogether sovereign in

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its nature, yet God probably elected him to his sublime eminence among good men, in view of the circumstance that he was, or would be, the best of living men. The great progenitor of the favored nation was no warring chief or military general famed for bloody contest,—no Jupiter or god-like hero, but a plain, peaceable man, eschewing every merely personal aim, and humbly walking with God. Whatever, therefore, may have been *all* the reasons for the choice of this man as the head of this great people, we are deliberate in pointing out

1. *The high religious character of Abraham as an incipient element of the prosperity of the Hebrew Nation.*

If special religious tendencies are not transmitted in the *blood*, they are certainly transmitted in the *line*. To deny this, is to contend with the authority of historical facts, and with our common observation sufficiently extended.

Every devout Israelite prayed more fervently when he thought of the persevering prayers of Abraham; and when he thought of the persevering prayers of Abraham it was in part, *because* Abraham's tendencies stirred within him.

No Israelite, enlightened from above, could ever acknowledge Abraham, or any other mere man, as the *ultimate model* of character. But a great model of personal excellence he certainly became with multitudes, so long as he was known and read in the assemblies of the people.

As they dwelt upon his singular *faith*, his *obedience* under severe trials, his simplicity and unsullied integrity, they became more faithful, obedient, truthful, and perfect in their own character as individuals, and as a people. So far as they followed Abraham and pleased God, they were prosperous, at peace, and happy.

2. But the leading element of their prosperity was *their possession of divine revelations and divinely appointed institutes.*

In writing to the Romans, St. Paul (who was quite competent to estimate the real value or worthlessness of the various heathen institutions he met with,) refers directly to the transcendent

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privileges of the Hebrews. "What advantage (over other nations) then hath the Jew?" He answers, "Much every way:" but "*chiefly*, because that unto them were committed the ORACLES OF GOD."

To the children of Abraham pertained "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the GIVING OF THE LAW, and the SERVICE of God." Jehovah, himself, became their Lawgiver. "He established a *testimony* in Jacob, and appointed a *law* in Israel which they were commanded to make known to their children; that the generations to come might KNOW them," who should arise and "declare them (again) to *their* children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget his works." No one of these laws was "higher" than any of the rest, as respects the authority enjoining them. They were all "high" laws, emanating from the highest authority. Each was well defined in its individual and general applications. Each was equally imperative in its execution. There was no Church AND State, but Church IN State, and State IN Church. Let it here be observed, that *all* the Levitical Institutes, in all their striking peculiarities, are only specific applications of great general principles, of personal and social laws, long before acknowledged and practiced under the Patriarchal dispensation, and which will continue hereafter to be acknowledged and practiced wherever mankind shall conform to the great essential moral and religious conditions of their nature.

Behold, then, the nation favored and free! Where are the freemen so free as the sons of Jacob, living under laws so wise, so strict, so beneficent? The devout Israelite must *bow down* to *no* human being, as such, nor commute his sacred dignity, at the peril of his soul.

The Declaration of his Independence is proclaimed amid "thunderings and lightnings" from the mountain top. The declaration of rights—the constitution of Heaven—lifts him, at once, far above the frown of any and every mortal man. So long as he obeys, no enemy may touch him and prosper.

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No nation, *as a whole*, before or since—monarchical, republican, or what else—could boast of *such freedom*,—rational liberty, as was, once and again, the birth-right of the humblest man, the poorest of the people among the descendants of Jacob.

It was *liberty under law*,—not self-will under self. It was *liberty* from *God*, not *license* from *man*.

The ten general principles embraced in the injunctions of the Decalogue were matured in the divine mind from a full view of all the exigencies of human nature, throughout all ages. No human jurisprudence could ever have drawn up such a summary, to which every moral act and every secret emotion can be clearly, readily, and safely referred.

This general Law, first essentially proclaimed in Paradise, variously reiterated to the generations of the Patriarchal era, and, at last, written with the finger of God on the tables of stone, was the *central element* of the national prosperity, the highest *glory* of the people Israel. So long as they kept *this* law they were the glory of all lands, "the perfection of (national) beauty," and a terror to the dissolute communities around them. When surrounding nations were sunk in the pollutions of paganism; when Gentile sages were groping in great darkness, blindly tracing one manifestation of creative power to this god and another to that; when devoted, benighted multitudes saw the sun in the heavens moved by one divinity, and the moon by another;—the son of Abraham, enlightened and devout, raised his suppliant eyes to *Him* whose finger moves the "universal frame," and the little *child* was early taught, what this blind philosophy had failed to teach, that this Almighty Personal Power pervaded the heavens and the earth; that this one energy, propelling countless revolving spheres, and wielding the fiery comet through its long, lonely traject, is mysteriously centred in the Eternal Essence of all excellence, in unity of one intelligent Cause—the one only living and true Jehovah. Yes, they were prosperous above all other nations, because they were wise;

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and they were wise because they followed the light that fell immediately from Heaven.

When the far-famed pagan rationalist, (rationalist in the better sense,) the profoundest moralist of heathen antiquity, the loftiest genius that Athens ever produced,—awoke to a manly sense of the All-Searching Presence of One, Supreme, Intelligent Mind,—it was the radiance of Heaven, descending first on Palestine and glimmering athwart the Ægean Deep, that fell upon the eyelids of the "wise man" when he drank the fatal hemlock, and died a martyr to the truth. For it must be conceded that Socrates and other Greek philosophers derived their light either from Palestine, or through tradition from one of the sons of Noah. They were dependent on *traditions*, not intuitions, for their best notions of Deity. They were yet *more* dependent, either directly or indirectly, on the Israelites living contemporaneously with themselves.

These two facts in authentic history are of great importance; not only as indicating the *origin* of the highest heathen conceptions of Deity, and the source of their best ethical systems, but as also indicating the *origin* of the Hellenic and Roman Institutes; and by consequence, as indicating the real origin of the modern Gallican and other European laws, which are assumed by some able economists to be derived, *ultimately*, from the Roman code. The English or American law also is essentially the body of the Church Canons, traceable to the Hebrew Institutes. A bust of the Hebrew law-giver decorated the library of a Roman statesman.

The transcendent prosperity of the Hebrew people was felt and acknowledged by the heathen nations far and near. Monarchs from remote regions visited the "City of the Great King." "For lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together; they saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away." While gazing upon the strength and beauty, the splendour and opulence of the Grand Symbol of the Divine Presence, the loyalty, virtue, and *equality* of the population, they

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marvelled, were troubled, they hasted away. Well might these exclaim, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Yes, human nature—beyond the boundaries of the Christian Zion—never assumed a *lovelier*, *purer*, *more glorious* aspect, than it did on the banks of the Jordan, among the tribes of the Lord, when they heard His voice and walked in His Statutes. As rigid virtue and piety contributed to individual strength and efficiency, so the whole nation grew *strong* and *mighty*, as they were humble, faithful and obedient. In Jerusalem, the Lord had said, my name shall dwell there. Hither the tribes came up to hear the law and celebrate His praise. Here stood the temple, "the noblest pile that ever pressed the earth," the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Lord, with the two tables of stone, was placed. Here the heavenly glory descended, uttering forth the oracles of life. Here sat the wisest and most erudite of eastern kings, "Solomon in all his glory," swaying a sceptre from the hand of God—a sceptre of righteousness and peace—over all the kings from Egypt to Chaldea.

Jerusalem! the Scene of the most sublime events in the annals of mankind! the favored spot whereon angels have deigned to tread their heavenly feet! Mount Zion! beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth—God was known in her palaces for a Refuge!

Behold, the faithful tribes thronging the temple gates to celebrate the praises of Jehovah. See, their king, learned, illustrious, devout, kneeling near the altar before all the congregation, supplicating the mercies of God on his people and their children, and thus you may infer their transcendent prosperity. Well might they fondly exclaim, "What nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for." "What nation is there so great that hath STATUTES and JUDGMENTS so righteous as all this LAW." It is not, then, the nature or extent of their *commerce*, not the power or fame of armies or navies, not

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even the renown of their warriors and kings, but *statutes* and *judgments* vouchsafed from Heaven. So long as these were administered by men fearing God and hating covetousness, they continued to maintain a moral ascendency over every other people.

The Hebrew regimen touched the individual springs of individual action. Every man felt every law to be a law for *himself*, and *that*, under a *divine* sanction. He regarded no law as emanating from *man;* hence he had no beggarly fear of man, as such. Human authority was a mockery when divine laws were clearly taught and impartially executed—when, not only the organic law itself, but its *exposition* and *its execution* were divinely appointed, so that no individual or majority could originate a single enactment for his neighbor, or for the minority of the people. Hence, you perceive here the *higher law* in its true and safe application. No majority, as such,—no agency whatever, short of one directly commissioned from Heaven's ultimate throne, could apply this law *beyond* the *personal acts* of the individual who conceived this law to be the "higher law." Here was individual independence, individual equal rights, exercised in absolute indifference to, or defiance of, any interference or espionage of other men, or bodies of men.

Here is an approach to a social perfectibility, that modern philanthropy has as yet hardly dreamed of. Here are the lineaments of a perfect humanity, to which the Church, from past unbelief, must as yet look forward.

The Lord was "very near" unto them. The daughter of Zion was as the apple of his eye. "Behold, I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badger's skin (saith the Lord). I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain upon thy neck. I put a jewel on thy forehead, and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head. Thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom; and thy renown went forth among the

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heathen for thy beauty—for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God."

3. But a dread Decadence was to follow:—Shall such a people, so far advanced—so near in the divine affection, ever fall back and pine away under the scorn and derision of the base and the abominable? Shall beauty—so transcendent—the handiwork of Heaven, ever be unveiled to the gross stare—the wanton touch—of the profane and polluted heathen?

Alas! the daughter of Sion forsook the Lord her God, and committed the abominations of the heathen. "Thou didst *trust* in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot, because of thy renown."

The majority of the people, and their king, flushed in their prosperity—flattered by their neighbors, and deceived by their own deceitful hearts—"drew back from the good ways of the Lord," and were turned unto their idols: and soon, but a few were found in the borders of Jacob, who humbly and sternly withstood the popular mania for idols, and the odious abominations of heathen worship. Through a succession of dire vicissitudes, the princes and the people went on from bad to worse. Torrents of social vices swept over the land. Idleness, sensuality, oppression, lying, slandering, Sabbath-breaking, profanity and contempt of God, every where prevailed: and no power under the heavens (or *above* them) could now avert the blackening cloud of vengeance soon to burst upon their guilty heads, and to *scatter* them among their enemies. The cup of their iniquity was, at last, filled to the brim—the patience of God was, at length, exhausted, and this stupid and stubborn people must now begin to realize, in all their bitterness, the consequences of their iniquity. A day of wrath—a day of trouble and distress—a day of wasteness and desolation—is at hand. The mighty man of valor trembles in his loins, and howls bitterly on the ground. A voice of wailing is heard out of Zion—"How are we spoiled! A nation, fierce and strong, have come up against us! The army of the Chaldees encompass

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thee, O Jerusalem, and break down thy walls! Thy holy temple have they defiled, and our streets run down with blood! Woe unto us, that we have sinned!—that we have sinned!! Our young men perish in the streets! Our daughters are a prey to devouring legions! Teach your daughters, O ye women—teach your daughters, wailing!—that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters! Our transgressions are bound upon our neck, and they that hate us do carry us away! *We all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*"

Alas! she that was the glory of all lands, and princess among the provinces, is gone into captivity. She sitteth alone—alone—upon the ground, and hangeth down her head! She weepeth sore in the night, and tears are on her cheeks. The ways of Zion do mourn—her gates are desolate—her priests sigh—her beauty hath departed and "faded like a leaf—her iniquities, like the wind, have taken her away!"

II. I SHALL ILLUSTRATE, SOMEWHAT, THE IDENTITY OF THE GREAT GENERAL LAWS WHICH CONTROLLED THE HEBREW DESTINY, WITH THOSE THAT HAVE EVER OPERATED, VITALLY, IN THE REAL RISE AND DECAY OF OTHER NATIONS, AS SUCH.

I remark here that though several of the old historians and philosophers had derived, through tradition from Palestine, and otherwise, many fragments of the Hebrew Institutes, yet they always fail in presenting us with the true idea of national prosperity. And it is remarkable and significant, that the poor infidels, Gibbon and Hume, never knowingly point us to the true epoch when the people had actually made the nearest approach to real national prosperity. *They* never climbed the heights of Zion to survey the panorama of the Past. They sat under the fig-tree of our civilization, but knew not that the invisible winds wafted to it the invisible pollen from the Tree of Life.

We must, therefore, leave these shadows which benighted and solitary spirits have sought, and rise to the holy mount of vision

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and accustom our eye to the broad blaze of the sun whose burning radiance dissipates the cold bewildering mists that hover heavily over the low levels of prejudice and passion.

We must yet rise above the region of storm and tempest which shake the various eminences in Church or State; and seek the point in space where the spirit, humbly poised on its own true identity, may first calmly look to God, and then upon the vast realm of the Past,—and here diligently descry the long, long lines of everlasting laws extending themselves from the first chaos of mundane affairs down to the last dread crisis when "Time shall be no longer."

Nay, let us contemplate some of these general laws shooting back beyond the mystic heights where time began; and see how daring spirits who thought to trample them, and prosper still, soon felt beneath their impious feet the terrible *rebound* which threw them in dismay beyond the battlements of Heaven. The greater the stature and the dignity of the transgressor the greater the rebound—the more profound the plunge. The more exalted the nation that may set at naught the Almighty the more terrible the curse when the catastrophe comes.

Where do we read of such suffering as came on *Jerusalem* at last, when their national cup of iniquity was filled? Their knowledge of what they *had* been and *might have* been, gave the keenest edge to the invading sword. The delicate mother devouring the babe at her breast, knew and felt the being she was murdering to be *immortal*. What shame and contempt could equal theirs, with all their high sense of national character, when they at last beheld the foul bird of the heathen god soaring disdainfully over the proudest glories of the favored nation?

1. We say then, that the same general laws pervading the economy of all nations in all time are followed in their inevitable operations by rewards and penalties the *same in nature*, *but differing in their extent* or *intensity*, according to the religious capacity and elevation of the people; the descent being more

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steep and more terrific in the case of highly privileged nations, and *vice versa.*

Now, observe, that the *only* modification that can affect the undeviating action of these general social laws, is strictly *moral and religious*—not material. This modification may be an agency from God or one from the human will, or both: but it is always *moral.*

Need we inquire for example what were the efficient agencies that overthrew the great city, Babylon? The Babylonians, (like all other ancient heathen nations) had had some knowledge of the true God by tradition and otherwise. During the later periods, those of their greatest apparent prosperity, vast numbers of captive Jews, and many of the princes of Judah, had been borne thither, who had disseminated ampler knowledge of the true Jehovah. Daniel and others had exemplified, in that dissolute court, the life of godliness. But the people and their rulers contemned the great organic moral laws without which society in any of its stages of progress cannot hold together. Monstrous monopoly of the material results of labor, oppression on the largest scale, general concubinage and contempt for the holy marriage vow, luxury, lying, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, and the worst forms of idolatry, everywhere prevailed. National dissolution must ensue. It did ensue; but, at a period in their history utterly *unexpected* by the wisest and most talented statesmen in the cabinet of Belshazzar.—A notable instance of national self-complacence.

The same (and no other) general laws, binding with an iron grasp the penalties to the perpetration of national evil, are equally conspicuous in the sad and sanguinary phenomena of the other great empires of antiquity. All the great ends of true government were constantly overlooked in the fires kindled among the lower passions. When the last city or province had been subdued—when the triumphal car bore the mighty conqueror in the imperial pageant—when the strongest arm held the reins of government, and the empire *seemed* to rest in prosperity, at the very acme of glory,—the whole body-politic was a mass of cor-

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ruption, and the great laws of the great God were again hastening to dissolution, that which the profoundest statesmen had just proclaimed perpetual.

2. These general moral laws *are not, in the slightest degree, affected in their efficiency by any, or all, of the discoveries or improvements of modern times.*

Shall I point you to the modern despotisms of the East—nations tottering with decay—to the miserable republics on the South of this continent—nations of untimely birth? No. But rather to the track of bloodshed and revolution among the European states of our *own day*, to Paris itself—Paris—the foul seat, it would seem, of the foul Beast of the Apocalypse, if anywhere on earth.

Trace the course of the recent tornadoes of revolutions over Europe, and tell me if the causes, remote or proximate, lay in the want of mere material or scientific advancement. Put your finger on the map of Europe, and show me a single state, thoroughly Protestant, and generally moral, that did not escape the violence and blood of these inevitable revolutions. Is there no science in the French metropolis—no mental activity—no intellectuality—no arts—no refinement? Yes—but there is no Sabbath—and where there is no *Fourth* Commandment, there is no *Family*—and where there is no *Family*—you have neither the *Fifth*, the *Sixth*, nor the *Seventh* Commandment. And can you have *Society* without *these?* Vain thought! Society! Are all the ends of *Society* compassed in securing enough to eat, to drink, to wear? Let five hundred or five thousand men and women, contemning the experience of the race, form a Fraternity, or a State. Let them fence themselves in from mankind; let them bridle and bit their being into the pursuit of these ends; let them grub and grovel, and grovel and grub, till the "common stock" has become sufficient to feed and clothe the community for fifty years. What then? Why, if in ten years Dissolution did not mercifully interpose, the earth itself, if it had a mouth, would spew them beyond the Milky Way, and drop them at last into the

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dread Gehenna, where Communism may find no general laws to disturb and overthrow its absurdities and its abominations.

One great general law of Revelation—or, if you please, of the actual condition and destiny of man—is, that he can never rise from the depths of ignorance and self-condemnation in which he finds himself, without a divine impulse, received by and through the Savior Christ and his Church. If you say, *little* has been done through this influence down to the present—I state, as a historical fact, that *all* that has been done for mankind, as individuals or nations, has been by and through *this* divine influence, and no other.

Without the *Family*, without the *Church*, all the actings of Society become introverted. There is no free and joyous development. The whole social phenomenon becomes a floundering monster, devouring itself, and ever hastening to dissolution.

When the Hebrews lost the Revelation—the Living Oracles—the Law and the Testimony, beneath the immense rubbish of Talmud and Tradition, they lost the living *Church*, and they lost the loving *Family*. With these they lost everything. So when the Eastern and the Romish Churches, trembling before the living page of Inspiration, began to ask, like the Israelites at Sinai, that the voice of God should speak no more to them *directly*—when they began indolently to fear to read *directly* for themselves, lest "private judgment" might deceive and destroy—when they suspended the function of reasoning, and blindly raised the Golden Calf of a Blind Authority—when the miserable rubbish of Tradition began, again, to rise to mountain height between the people and the Ark of Testimony, overshadowing the nations in darkness and mildew—when at last, the teachers and the taught are found in mean prostration, wailing to the manes of the "Fathers" to come back and explain to them *what* the Word of God *might really* be, or mean—*then* we have Society, again, the same monstrous thing stalking about, trampling down the very frame-work—the primary laws—of humanity. What! Society without a Bible!—a Church without

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a Bible!—a Family without a Bible! As well imagine perfect day without the sun. In such a case, there is no permanent security—no progress, no liberty—no free, independent thought—no public honor—no domestic confidence—no restraint to passion—no deference for age or office—no happiness.

Now, these *general laws* controlling, at all *periods* of time in the *same* way, the course of human events and the destiny of nations, and consequently affecting the condition, rights, sex, capacity, labor and its results, of different classes of a community, must have had *their origin far before and above* anything that the human mind could originate.

Take the aggregate experience of the greatest individual mind of any age—what is it? Take that of a whole generation—what is it? Take the aggregate of what the human family have acquired in 5,000 years—then deduct what is lost in transmitting any *such* sequence of facts or events, on a question of this nature, from age to age,—and what does it *all* amount to? I protest, then, that the author or editor, or who else, who presumes to propound to mankind any theory of society or of government, which he refers to his own individual experience and observation, or to that of his own, or any age or ages, he is immeasurably reckless, and utterly uncandid. And yet how many of these upstart infidel philosophers, in their own complacency, have had the impertinence to propound to mankind not only a theory of society and of government, but of the economics of heaven and earth! They have written *Bibles* for the race. How many, at this moment—wildly renouncing all Divine institutes—are groping their way throughout the wild chaos of speculation, that they may bring back to the mother earth yet some other theory of Life and Destiny? How many poor political empirics, at this moment, in France, are babbling before the world about their miserable schemes of social organization! These all obstinately decline to receive a perfect series of general primary laws, vouchsafed from Heaven—too general for the human mind to originate—and which, in proportion to their

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prevalence in any national code, give value to real and personal estate, and provide for all the higher developments of humanity,—arraigning every individual, with Bible in hand, before the Court of *Heaven* and his own Conscience, and pointing him to his real interest, present and ultimate, as the chief motive of his daily acts. These universal laws contemned, the penalties are the same in nature in the case of *all* nations.

Now, in this career of reckless ranging, without helm or compass, no real *progress* in political science is possible. Plunging at random over the everlasting landmarks of life, the vain inquirer loses his equipoise. The great laws trampled, shake the surface beneath his feet, forbidding calm and copious investigation. To such an one all is motion, and *therefore* all is *progress!*—and all *progress* to him seems *change!* Whereas, the diligent Christian student discovers, from his solid stand-point, a grand *development*—not essential change—in the phenomena around him. All is to him a sublime evolution of great, complex and generic laws, revealed from Heaven, and now being elaborated by those communities of mankind who are nearest, or above, the sacred eminence from which he himself views the whole.

This development, alas, has been sadly checked and thwarted, from age to age, as the lower passions, rising rampant, weighed down the nations; at one epoch under the dire pursuits of wars and the horrible abominations of heathen worship; at another, under the wand of priestly domination, when every evolution of humanity was a caricature of itself. But wherever, in antiquity, or in modern time, the light of Divine revelation has shone, either through direct traditions, or the teaching church, it has brought forth from the frozen earth a plentiful harvest of intellectual and scientific enlargement. The rays of heavenly light, falling first on Palestine, glided into Egypt and Greece. The same heavenly rays, in glorious reflection, dimmed by the deadly emanations from the swamps of mediæval time, are again bursting forth, and promise soon to dry up the foul effluvia of the Tiber itself, and to bring to naught the whole sys-

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tem of the inane stupidities of Roman Canon and Ritual that is still a disgrace to us all as children of the great European family—as the offspring of the intelligent Creator.

But the pseudo-economist to whom we referred, has yet to discover that the great *moral* relations, though infinitely various, have never varied an iota in six thousand years from the one Centre. Murder, fraud, slander, lying and idolatry have *always* been, and *always* will be, murder, fraud, slander, lying and idolatry—heinous in the sight of God. The *elements* of human nature—the organic laws of society—are the same *now* as they were in the days of Noah, Solomon, or St. Paul. Respecting these "there is nothing *new* under the sun." The passing winds—the wild tempest—may agitate the restless *surface* of the seas, when all is tranquil in the silent bosom of the *deep*. The surface of humanity is, now and again, greatly *diversified;* manners and customs at different times and places give various hues and shades to the *exterior* of things; revolutions, inventions, new discoveries, all produce their several effects; but the great natural and moral laws, centering in the eternal Jehovah, continue undisturbed in their undeviating operation throughout *all* time. One generation may be attired in sackcloth, and the next in purple and fine linen; but it is the same helpless, guilty nature still.

At one period men may traverse the earth at the dull, tardy pace of a caravan of Ishmaelites—at another more advanced age, they may float from place to place on the wings of the wind, but each is no nearer to God than the other.

Any possible degree of advancement in any of the arts, in the science of government, or any of all the sciences, can never essentially modify, alter or affect, either the great doctrines of Revelation itself, or the elementary condition of mankind to which these doctrines are eternally adapted. There is the highest moral certainty to believe that there is not one passage of Sacred Scripture, duly interpreted, that will ever contradict any thorough classification of new facts; that all faithful gene-

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ralizations, fully elaborated, will continue (as they have heretofore) to harmonize with every faithful interpretation of the Bible; that what the Church has continued to hold as, in the main, truly Catholic teaching, will still continue to claim alliance with every unborn reality which is yet to burst upon the human mind in the progress of future time. It is this *universality* in the divine, revealed laws, binding every link in the sequence of events through long ages, that brings us to any confident conclusions as to the rise or fall of any given nation or people. And when we discover no one exception in the operation of these laws since time began, how can we hesitate as to their *origin* being *before and above* the highest flight of human reason?

III. Shall I then proceed to indicate certain elements of Decay in the Institutions of our own Country?

Shall we entertain the unwelcome inquiry? Is it *possible* that *our* "iniquities like the wind are, actually, taking *us* away?"

This is *no* gratuitous question in *any* point of view. The history of nations, both sacred and profane, admonishes us to *entertain* such a hypothesis. There is not in the numerous examples of national declension, a *single* instance where the multitudes of the people, or their most distinguished statesmen, had any serious apprehensions that "all was not, and would not be well," even when the hour of their doom was at hand. They folded their arms in that easy, stupid *skepticism*, that clings to the spirit after a long course of obstinate pride and sensuality.

Cheerfully would I cherish the fond hope that a destiny of *unfading renown* and blessing awaits this great republic. Nor would I yield to that *peevish*, *melancholy foreboding* that is ever beholding shades and spectres even in the brightness of the noonday sun. But, with the eventful past in view, and the Bible in our hands, how shall we designate certain obviously prevailing tendencies among the masses of the people and their rulers?

Now, on this ocean of vast uncertainty, heaving with life and im-

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mortality, have we no point in the moving canopy above from which to estimate, with certainty, our actual bearings? If not,—then there is no end to disquisition. If the human family are thrown adrift amid these blustering strands—these wild hurricanes that guard this crazy earth, with no kindly luminary, ever fixed and sure, by which to take their course,—then one opinion is as good as another on any topic of the Social Economy.

I. It is necessary here to premise that, wherever, in the past, the external institution of Revealed Religion has existed in its *simple integrity*, *there* all the ends of civil organization have been attained in the highest degree; and *there* they have been *perpetuated*, just so long as this institution of religion has been preserved in its simplicity. Look at Israel under the Judges, under the reigns of the *pious* kings. Look at any of those ancient nations that came in close proximity with the Hebrews, how much they differed from those more remote. Look at the Nestorians and other ancient communities (isolated from the Romish to Greek churches) in the East, whose existence is perpetuated with many blessings. They have always had an *open* Bible and they have generally aimed to admeasure the dimensions of their Church by that open Bible. Look, now, at Scotland, England, Holland, and New England, where the external institution of religion is kept, in the main, within the simple bounds of the simple gospel. Where are all the ends of civil government so fully realized (though even here only very *partially*) as in those countries?

This being a *fact* in history—a very prominent and significant fact—no honest man can hesitate to proclaim the same under any fear of encountering any popular sentiment founded in ignorance or in the dishonesty and selfishness of that large and mischievous class of men whom we might denominate the "Peoples' Demagogues." These poor panderers to the popular ignorance and the popular vice, meanly cast a blot on the actual history of the actual past, and hypocritically pretend that the State can exist without any kind of *Church;*

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as if the priestly ignorance and assumptions of certain ages and countries were inherent elements of the Gospel Church. If you refer to the Romish or the Anglican church, we will join in the cry, "*no* Church and State!" That is, let us have *no such relations* as exist between these Churches and these States! But we say, no community can long exist without *Religion and State.* And the freedom and happiness of any people has been, is, and will be, in proportion to the essential purity of their religion—the open Bible being the standard of that purity. The Constitution of the United States, (notwithstanding all the recent miserable bluster about Church and State) defers in many particulars to the essential Christian Church. For you cannot have Religion without Church, nor can you have an actual Church without actual Religion.

For, however sensible and intelligent men may differ as to the visible Church, they must all acknowledge that it is something tangible—having life, energy, action;—that it is not a mere collection of abstractions or transcendental sublimities—not some tiny web of mere moral entities, depending from some aerial power; but a visible, incorporated agency through which the will of God is unfolded and perpetuated—subject to the conditions of time, place, personality; and inspired, (or moved upon,) by a spiritual life which accrues to it by divine promise directly from above.

The Church is not, and cannot be, *imperium in imperio*, but it is MORE,—it is at this moment, in this country, an empire OVER an empire. It is by Christ (through his Church) that kings reign, and princes (rulers) decree justice. All that is good and permanent in the Constitution and laws of the United States rests on the same sublime pedestal with the Church.

The Church visible "is not *of* this world," but is it not *in* this world? Is it not *to* and *for* this world? Has she not given laws to Europe and the United States? What was at first the common law of England *had been* the canon law of the *Church.* What then becomes of this ignorant cry about Church and State?

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It has no pertinency here in the United States, wherever the Bible is open and read.

This fear of some monstrous union of "Church and State" is the fear of the most culpable ignorance, in these times at least—if it was not in the exciting period of the Revolution, when some of the distinguished fathers, spurning all *English* ideas of society, craved everything that was then *French*, at a time when France knew no Church but the Romish caricature—no Christian philosophy above the political reveries of the Sorbonne. We smile, now, at the poor French fears that enervated such a mind as that of John Jay, when, after his return from France, we see him persuading effectually the Legislature of this State (New York) to disfranchise the *Protestant* ministry! This school of economists whom Providence has been scourging for the past hundred years—turning away from the constant lessons of history—would open a gulf impassable between the Church and the State. Vain attempt! As well attempt to open a vacuum between the coarse earth beneath our feet and the all-pervading atmosphere above, that ministers to all light, life and blessings without end.

2. I would offer here an important distinction:—There are certain social tendencies which one nation has in common with *all* nations; others, which it has in common with a *few;* and others again that are peculiar to itself; if we group together some seven or eight distinct and independent nations, comprising mainly the races of the Anglo-Saxon and the Teuton—but which are more philosophically distinguished as the *Bible-reading group of nations;*—we shall observe the order of Providential blessing, and the order of cursing, to be much the same in each case, and differing widely in these respects from the other communities of mankind, from whom the celestial light is shut out.

These blessings, then, are greater, freer, purer, than simply *national* blessings. They are a gushing tide of beatitude, rising high above the levels of nations, and flowing *onwards*, carrying away the walls of war-like cities, the fencings of separate States, and filling all hearts with joy and gladness.

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Great Britain and North America are now fulfilling essentially the same destiny. The religious, civil, and literary institutions are nearly identical. In certain lines of *material* progress, all with them seems elastic—promising; nothing tottering or effete. But let us look again. Is the youth in his prime never cut down? May not fatal disease *invade* the young and rising nation?

This brings me to the

1. Indication of dissolution in the national existence of the United States, viz.: *Contagion from the dissolute communities of Roman Catholic Europe.*

Formerly this contagion was of trivial extent—not affecting the vitals of the system. The essential vigor resisted and overpowered every disease merely topical. The French virus of the West and the South—though the most malignant of all—has been thrown off before the internal moral energy of the North and the East. Of *all* the causes of decay *now* operating, we place the one here indicated as the most unmanageable, and the most intense. Look at the effects of this agency of Continental European immigrations in the Southern regions of this hemisphere, and around the Caribbean Sea. At the periods of their immigration, most of the countries whence they came were less intelligent than now, but more free from a *class of vices* that render them now more destructive elements of society, especially of such an order of society as ours, to the equal and harmonious action of which, the indispensable quantum of moral or religious force, is far greater than in most other economies as yet existing on the earth.

Let this moral or religious force be neutralized by the overpowering swarms of vices now being imported, that have been fermenting for centuries in the stagnant pool of the Middle Ages,—and farewell to the fair form of OUR Liberty, which was revived, nourished, and restored to men, (as the infidel Hume explicitly admits,) under the auspices of Puritan pulpits, Puritan Sabbaths, and Puritan school-houses.

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Shall Liberty continue to smile when she beholds around her feet these leprous multitudes pouring in upon us from every estuary of Papal Europe, and putting to our lips the foul cup that the iniquitous Power at Rome has held to theirs for ages?

Every improvement in the steam engine—every new facility for locomotion by sea or land—every transatlantic crisis in commerce, in manufactures, or in the frequent upheavings of the social economy—all these are now *multiplying* exceedingly the magnitude of this new and threatening power. I ask you calmly to contemplate these, and their direct results.

It would not be altogether insane if the nation should even now tax itself to purchase the Bermudas, or other Western isles where Romish nuncios and Romish bishops could neither come nor scheme. It would even be *wise* there to quarantine, for ten years, these contagious masses of social corruption. Is that people a *wise* and *understanding* people, then, who, not only open their gates (and in the case of the genteel foreign debauchee, their *parlors*) to these gross and groveling crowds, but who lift them over their own heads by investing them, at once, with the power to pull down the very pillars of their institutions?

Until within the last twenty years the policy of conferring the elective franchise indiscriminately on all foreigners, was of trivial consequence one way or the other. But *now* everything has changed respecting this policy; and the ratio of immigration is *still* increasing.

Better open our ports to a fleet of slavers fresh from the Niger than to one importation from the lazar-city on the banks of the Seine, where so many poor fools of fashion from the United States, both male and female, "finish their education" and return corrupt and corrupters, for life. Romish immorality, especially Parisian immorality, is a deep distillation of all the dregs of every specific abomination, one particle of which wafted over the salt seas, still *retains* its inherent virulence, and is sufficient to infect with sad and bewildering maladies, a whole community.

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"*French* refinement!" *French* teachers! *French* masters for your sons and daughters!

If we must have foreign accomplishments, let them be any other than *French!* Alas! the arts and sciences cultivated under that dismal moral canopy, lend their hand not only to deface and denude the fair and beautiful conceptions of the virtuous mind; but to decorate with show of decency, taste and grace, that which the wild Hottentot, besmeared with filth, would nauseate, and turn away from—to catch his breath.

Let the American citizen, then, preserve his moral sense and self-respect. Let him disdain to compromise his dignity by meanly imitating the meanest people of the meanest city on God's footstool. Let him coolly calculate the consequences of these influences here indicated; and turn his eyes to the real and only means of deliverance from national ruin.

2. A second indication of national decay is the *gradual suppression of Biblical or religious instruction in our public schools.*

The influence of a general public instruction, though latent, is mighty and all-pervading over the family, and over the community. Political economists have generally left this question untouched. The instances of a general provision for the intellectual and moral culture of the masses of a whole nation, being so few, it was deemed a difficult department from which any controlling general principle could be evolved.

But it is not so now. It was not really so heretofore, to any who might have thoroughly understood the nature of the Hebrew Institutes under which *every child* in the land was imperatively instructed in a system of general instruction, affording a high national and moral bent to the juvenile mind. The perpetuation of this system of general instruction was provided for from generation to generation.

The same notion that every child must be daily instructed in religion pervades the Apostolical Epistles, and was extensively developed among the early Eastern Christians. It has been more conspicuously unfolded in the systems of public instruction

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instituted some two hundred years ago in Scotland and New England; in both of which systems the Bible was intended as the paramount text-book.*

It is matter of interest to thoughtful and intelligent men that two thirds of the colleges at present in the whole United States have been founded and sustained in connection with these Puritan or Scotch systems of public instruction. In all of these colleges the Bible is open and read. Not one Faculty of all these higher institutions conceives it possible to hold young men in subordination, or to teach them to govern themselves, without the Bible and the spirit of the Bible. Thomas Jefferson's plan of a university without a Bible was a miserable, miserable failure. They had to call in a Christian Faculty to bury out of sight the monstrous abortion. These higher institutions have lost far less of their religious element than the common school, from the encroachments of aspiring infidel politicians, or the intermeddling of aspiring Romish politicians.

Now this religious instruction which has been gradually suppressed in our public schools was not the peculiarities of any one given denomination having any decent claim whatever to be called *Christian*. It is the *essential Bible* that has been so extensively suppressed. No man may therefore cavil with me as to what I intend by the phrase "religious instruction." All honest men of ordinary intelligence and common sense know what I mean.

Formerly there was no serious dispute touching the necessity of general religious teaching in our public schools, excepting now and then when some denominational peculiarity might happen to be raised above its supposed importance through the inadvertence or imprudence of the teacher. *All* acknowledged the Bible

* The late Louis Philippe, it is said, corresponded with the late Rev. Dr. Chalmers, desiring for France some similar order of public instruction as the Scotch. But that wise and liberal king did not foresee that wherever in France he might lay the foundation stone of such an institution as Chalmers indicated, the Jesuits would dig it up in the darkness of the night.

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to be the best of books, and its use in the school as most needful and appropriate; or if any did not, they were of that class of small men whose influence in a thoroughly Protestant community could produce little or no inconvenience on any question of this nature.

It is of the greatest practical importance to us now, to understand correctly where *this issue* lay some forty years ago, in the events that tended to the suppression of the old quantum of religious instruction in the common schools of New England and elsewhere. I can only stop to say that this issue was NOT between *one* religious denomination and another *as such;* but between these religious denominations and a noisy, truant minority of society who operated politically and socially and factiously, until the schools were formally dragged beyond the outer walls of the Christian Zion. So that should the Christian denominations now unite, as they undoubtedly should, in establishing a system of *Evangelical Public Schools*, it is next to a moral certainty that there would arise no practical, *insurmountable* difficulties which could materially affect the great and indispensable end, the daily unfettered perusal (as the great text book,) of the simple Bible. Formerly where the majority, in these communities, read the Bible, one denominational subtilty usually neutralized another under the general charity and intelligence pervading such a community.

To some this suggestion may seem inadequate, if it were practicable: Perhaps it would be. And many impediments would be met with in the *beginnings* of any remedial order of institution. But it is better to suggest something than merely to declaim against what may be better than nothing. I have seen nothing definite put forth from any quarter. But I am certain that nothing short of what is here offered, can consist with the most direct obligations of the Christian churches to their children; and, moreover, I ask those who are capable of estimating the question—What is to become of the Protestant churches, as such, if your children must be educated in *alien* hands, and trained up

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to the new delusion, that the Bible is such an inexplicable, dangerous affair, that the young may tremble on opening it, lest it may unfit them for study, or set them a quarrelling and fighting with their neighbors? The exclusion of the Bible and essential religion from public instruction is more general and complete than many are aware of. Point me out the public school where the substance and the soul of Christianity are not carefully excluded.

Religion, alas!—simple rational piety enters not the halls of public instruction, or, if admitted, she comes an unwelcome guest,—muffled and veiled,—her heavenly beauty and attractiveness are dexterously excluded from the wakeful, youthful eye. Nor is she asked to sit, but bows in low obeisance, till the timid teacher mumbles forth, perhaps, a cold, guarded, straitened prayer; and then takes her departure to leave room for Mammon, Mercurius, and other heathen deities, to rule the day.

There never was a greater sophism palmed off from the pit of hell upon the human family, than that any degree of *merely* literary or scientific knowledge can make man better in the sight of Heaven, or change his moral character or his moral relations. Shall calculating accounts teach the young the measure of his daily duty to God and man? Shall he who pronely bends over his mother earth, and picks from her bosom ten thousand genera and species of flowers and flinty rocks; shall he who grows learned, poring over the lexicon of a dead or a living language; shall he who measures the heavens and weighs the moving worlds as in a balance; *thus* overcome the moral malady within himself, and please God better than he who may imagine the hills begirting the small region of his rustic homestead, to be the utmost limits of earthly things? There is no intellectual panacea to heal the maladies of the human soul. The tree of knowledge, alas,—secular knowledge—has not one healing leaf. The most magnificent display of physical power, could it lift the earth itself, and drift it beyond the boundaries of space, can never raise man-

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kind one inch above the dead level of moral desolation to which they are actually reduced.

The essential spirit of the Christian Church is the same as that of the Hebrew Church. She throws around her children a kindly inclosure from the uncircumcised in heart, warning them of "evil communications," and blesses him who "standeth not in the way of sinners."

She insists that every child, in every corner of the land, shall be taught, when "rising up" and "sitting down," the written Laws of God. Shall there, then, be *one* place where this law, for six hours a day, shall be excluded, as an *offence?*

What has the State—which from the days of Constantine, has obtruded its profane hand, and defiled the ark of God,—what has the State, I demand, to do in teaching Christians how to teach their children? What is this public sentiment before which the Church trembles and turns pale, and idolatrously yields up her children to be drilled and perverted five-sevenths of their time? The *one* circumstance, by itself, that the youth finds himself, for six hours a day, where he knows the inspired laws of the Creator must not be whispered, is, of itself, subversive of his virtue, and directly tending to dwarf his intellectual powers. Talk of "home influence!" What kind of "home influence" will twenty years more give us, under such a system?

But we are not left to reason from the cause to the effect. What could be anticipated is already fearfully realized. Where will you be compelled to hear more profane and impure language than on the play-grounds of these public schools? By what ties are these youth to be attached to the Church, who are daily taught the daily *neglect* of the Word of Life? What know they of the Bible or of the Church—the very mention of either being improper, if not a cause of ridicule or punishment? We talk of the insubordination of the rising generation—of their contempt for religious institutions—for age and office. But what other can we expect. Do you say the Sabbath-school tends to counterbalance the evil? Yes. But how much is to be expected from

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the one or two hours, once a week, of Sunday-school instruction? Besides, how few of the youth over fourteen or fifteen years of age are not beyond and above the influence of Sabbath-schools? The Sabbath-school is a bright ray from heaven—but not enough to moisten the frozen earth into fertility.

What hold, by affection or otherwise, have our churches on these youth and those who have already passed through the barren course of this misnamed public instruction?

The child thus alienated from the Church, soon becomes the alien youth, and the alien youth soon becomes the alien Odd-fellow, if nothing worse. Do you know how this new and ominous institution of vast and growing numbers and power regard the Churches? Do you know that the Odd-fellow in this community is the legitimate offspring of the Public School, and of other institutions in which the feeling of fraternity for earthly ends is nourished, and takes a form?

I confess I cannot see how the Protestant churches are to be perpetuated, unless they bring back their children under a decidedly Evangelical system of instruction—in which Christ is in all and over all, in which the first lesson is the love and fear of the Lord, and the love of his Church and people. "We have a lesson here to learn at Rome."

And if the Protestant Churches are not perpetuated, what shall become of these Protestant *civil* institutions of the country? Has it come to this, that our Churches, with Bible in hand, and all their intelligence, cannot teach their own children, but must send them down to this Egypt for wisdom? Has it come to this, that her own poor children must be fed in their poverty, and taught in their ignorance, by agencies of sympathy and affection, too enlarged to be cherished in her own bosom? Can we have a Church without *children?* [And, to digress one moment—Can you have a Church without the *poor?*—and complain, if the Odd-fellows constitute themselves into a diaconate, whose functions are to take care of the poor?]

The evils, then, arising from this deficient and corrupting

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system of Public Instruction are wide-spread. They hinder every attempt in the private or select Schools to reach the ends of instruction; they hinder the efficiency of the Sabbath-school system; they create an enormous demand for corrupt and corrupting literature, and thus tend to support the living corrupters of the *Press*, which is not the least element of National Decay; but which we cannot now stop to enlarge upon.

These evils of this system are felt in the insubordination of families—in the general lowering of the standard of purity among the young of both sexes—in the profanity of the streets—in the *general* tendencies of a system under which the vice of lying is checked by no appeal to the divine Omniscience, and under which, all the higher motives and aspirations of humanity are deadened.

What mean, then, these thronging hordes of impious men and women crowding our thoroughfares, on the Sabbath day? What mean the multiplication of these Sunday papers, and their readers? If, then, such be the deterioration in Public Instruction, and such the startling, immoral effects, where is the individual who, so far as respects *this* city at least, is so responsible before God and man for this state of things, still growing worse, as John Hughes, the schismatical minister, who did his best to shut out the sunlight of Revelation from the rising generations in this and other communities?

Say not these evils abound in other countries. They do. But our Ship of State is of too sublimate a construction to carry such a ballast of abominations as these gross and grovelling communities. If Providence had performed the mighty works in those foreign communities, that it has here, they might long ago have banished these infidel systems, these Sunday papers and other vices that menace the integrity of Society here.

3. A third indication of National Decay, is, *The False Position and consequent inefficiency of the Christian Ministry.*

Here is a large field. I shall refrain from pursuing the subject, offering only a very few thoughts. All will admit, as matter of history, that the Ministry of different ages and

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countries have occupied positions widely different in their effects, both in relation to the Church itself, and to the manners of the people, and the character of the Government. No less unquestionable is the proposition, that some one of these various relative positions is, other things being equal, *more* than any of the rest in accordance with the Word of God, and therefore, the most desirable in order to reach the sublime ends for which this Ministry is the appointed means. This being the case, it is faithless and base to fold one's arms in indifference under the old opiate illusion that "It has always been so, and will be so, that the Ministry is ever being driven, or driving itself from its Heaven-appointed Position in the Church." No good man of intelligence can be easy and indifferent here. When the Anglo-Saxon and Teuton Ministry escaped from the thraldom of Rome, great results were justly anticipated; as it had in its hand the open Word of life, and had at command the ear of the Church, and of the nations. A new era of glorious enlargement followed; which might be distinguished as the *Westminster era.* The essential canon laws of fifteen hundred years standing, *continued* to avail as to the distribution of labor—the support, the initiation, and the general character of the reformed Ministry—with here and there an insignificant exception. No such thing, *e. g.*, was then known in Christendom as three or four of the Ministry sustaining (by sundry sad, and not very creditable means) three or four separate churches among three or four hundred people, led off by three or four factious laymen or laywomen, irresponsible to any power, either in the Church or the State.

No such voluntary humilities were as yet known to Christendom as twenty ministers of the gospel officiating, *ad seriatim*, during twenty Sabbaths, in one "vacant" church, each in his turn undergoing, before a court of "honorable women not a few," aided by four or five "moneyed brethren,"—a certain examination on certain qualifications concerning which it might be superfluous here to enlarge. Suffice it to say that when one of these twenty "candidates" is "called and settled," the pro-

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gramme of procedure as to "preaching," "praying," "tea parties," "fairs," "sewing circles," walking the streets, smiling, dressing, pleasing, popularizing—managing him, her, or it; I say the programme thus emanating from the "Authority" existing for the moment—an authority based on whims, whines, and hysterics—offers a Rubric or Canon law that an honest man, "hating every *false* way," cannot understand without contamination;—more degrading than any rubric or law that Rome ever imposed on the most stupid of her clergy. Better be governed by stupid bishops than *learned* women: better than either by an enlightened, comprehensive Canon Law, which would supersede a great redundance of "managements" and womanly tacts at which the simple mind revolts, and which might puzzle the most refined Jesuit to comprehend and to carry out.

I observe, then, that the *Christian ministry are, to a great extent, in a false position, in that they have slidden from the Platform of the Canon Laws, which were essentially Apostolical.*

They have plunged from the pinnacle of the Temple—broken loose from the ordinary and constant conditions of coöperative human agency. But the angels from Heaven have not taken care lest they might "dash their feet against the stones."

So long as there were Protestant canon laws, the ministry, if not the people, studied them; and in studying them, they learned to obey them; and in learning to obey them, they were, generally, in the way and in the spirit of teaching and saving men and children.

Having repudiated these scriptural and time-sanctioned landmarks, they are now abroad in a wilderness of bewildering speculation—here and there attempting a few "by-laws" for some specific coöperation or "society," which are presently carried away beneath the rushing popular tread.

In assailing the corrupt and irresponsible Power of Rome, they have at length written and spoken themselves under a power more irresponsible, if not more corrupt—the power of ignorance and presumption—the power of the multitude—an epicene multitude, worse than the multitude in civil affairs.

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The world has *as yet* had no good laws from the indiscriminating multitude. This is a simple fact. He who denies it, is superficial or worse, and we dismiss him to the demagogues. "Good laws," says De Tocqueville, "must emanate from good men. The multitude are (actually) not good men; therefore good laws cannot emanate from the multitude."

Must we then, look to this ebb and flow of ignorance, and evil, and female caprice, for stable canons of coöperative action in the Church of God?

May each man, then, proceed without any regard to any other man's course?

May he squander the treasury of the Lord in schismatically erecting his church in the very center of a brother minister's field of labor, and thus set two religious communities quarreling for half a century, and hold them up as a laughing-stock in the streets of Eshkalon?

We smile at the miserable crudity that *all written* creeds are to be set aside. But still more crude and absurd is the proposition that written ecclesiastical canons of coöperation are not indispensable. Why not blot out all the common law of the land and depend on the "good sense and conscientiousness of the people"? Are all in the Church of God true *Christians?* And if they were, would they all be *perfect?* The theory of a perfect church and a perfect people is a chimera practically entertained by far larger numbers than might at first appear But like another "perfectionist error" less operative for genera mischief than this—it soon works out its own dissolution—by dispersions, alienations, ministerial estrangements, slanders, where the slanderer goes free—with all the extravagance of a self willed individuality that contemns all law not originating in its own conceit.

It is said that the old church-masters and burgomasters of this city, anxious to follow the "leadings of Providence," dared not to lay out their *new streets* by any comprehensive line or canon of utility, preferring to leave the matter to the mysterious natural workings of "the people." "The people," who are always "the

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safest to follow," not daring to adventure on what may have seemed to them an act of presumption, and tempting Providence, practically decided to leave the matter to the *lowing quadrupeds*, on whose meandering path they built their tenements and shaped their avenues.

The old Romans decided important matters by the entrails of animals; the old Dutch by their mysterious footsteps; and we, now, the momentous concerns of the Church, by an animal agency of wilder instincts than these.

Where the opinions of the laity (on a question, *e. g.*, of the forced removal of the pastor, whose character and official capacities are undisputed, and the pastor and his family are ruthlessly driven from their house and home) are always *understood* to be *final*—where a half-informed individual, with two or three religious ideas in his brain, and with a handful of gold, can (without being amenable anywhere) bring his majorities to bear on every vital local question—tell me that in thousands of instances the minister and his office are not utterly in contempt; and in many more instances every day liable to contempt?*

* I know it is God's way to *humble* both his ministers and his people—that he will rather *cross* such than *cast them away*. But God never *degrades* them whose lineage he hath made celestial.

He who thinks the ministry hath no high and peculiar attributes—will not sufficiently prepare himself for it, or properly fulfil its solemn functions after he has assumed it. Nor will such rightly appreciate it when solemnly assumed by others. It is true a good man will be a good man wherever he may stand in this probationary scene. But his *relative official utility* in the church and the world may be greatly *hindered* and neutralized through corrupt institutions, or the perversity of men of corrupt aims, or both.

E. g. In the everlasting fitness of things, the sphere of the eagle is aloft among the clouds. If you cage him, or clip his wings, the intended utility and glory of his being are utterly frustrated. Again: the natural sphere of man implies his essential *liberty*. If you manacle him, put him on an auction stand and price his muscles, his teeth, and the flash of his eye, you *hinder*, nay utterly overthrow, the primary end of his being. He is certainly in a *false position*. So, in the divine fitness of things, the ministry (moved inwardly to its work by the Holy Ghost, and this inward motion outwardly acknowledged,) is *actually* invested with that which the people are certainly not. To assert that the people can confer and recall his ministerial faculty, is therefore, a constructive blasphemy. If the people might impiously assume this function of the Holy Ghost, how could they even then "*send*" a minister to *themselves*?

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Take care, then, how you tamper with the character and acts of the poorest, weakest, humblest minister, lest you provoke the Lord to curse the land; and the country itself sink in contempt with a mill-stone about its neck. For it shall be more tolerable for Sodom than for such a people.—Luke x. 12 and context.

Surely the order of the divine institution of the ministry is under the heel of a monster power. Surely it is in a *false* position. In the sad surrender of its heaven-appointed position it is now operating as a most ominous cause of national dissolution. Moreover, *here* must be, with Christian people, the initiative to *restore* those fundamentals of ecclesiastical order and decency under which the country commenced its career. For it should never be overlooked that the *early* American Churches were generally guided either by old canon laws or by old canonical *usage*.

The meaning of the Bible, says one, is the Bible. We therefore follow the meaning or spirit of the Bible—*not* its *letter*.

But what would become of this meaning of the Bible if we destroy the *letter?*

Are we, then, to have no written rule of coöperation for permanent reference, in the Church, but depend on the "good sense and propriety of the people"—the "people" under storm or sunshine—the "people" groveling at the feet of rich men, or soar-

If you, then, "call" this minister—place him at your feet—place your fingers on his eyes—your hands upon his lips—demanding that he must *see* nothing over the heads of your majorities, and *speak* nothing but what may sell or fill the pews, respectably, or pay off your church debts—do you not place him in a false position? What! Must he thus become a *bad* man to be a *good* minister! Is Simony not a curse to the Church and the State? Is this mean jugglery *in order* to the *simple* and sublime ends of the Church on Earth? Now, so long as this local crudity, this small cunning, spite and prejudice, must be heard, and heard, and heard without end on the gravest questions touching the ministry; so long as the minister lives and moves according to every shrug of the shoulder—every wink or grimace of every wiseacre in the congregation, there can be no permanent respect or love for his office or himself; there can hardly be any blessing, any "*decency* and order," self-respect, or true Godliness. Perhaps some may *pity* him! Besides, this disorder grieves away the Spirit of *Peace*, and tends in the shortest way to dispersions in the Church, and ultimately to dissolution in the State.

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ing transcendentally in the regions of Utopia—the "*people*," ignorant, prejudiced, deceived or misled? Then, surely, we have an Idol-Calf as the *Center of Power and Authority*, trampling beneath its frantic hoof creeds and canons, and tossing and goring at random the helpless, exposed fugitive from ecclesiastical canon and decorum. Here is a many-headed monster lording it over God's heritage—more dementing and emasculating to the ministry than all the cardinals and popes with which the Church and the world have yet been cursed.

Now, if something like this, or half like this, actually prevails among us, need I ask whether we have not here an element of dissolution in the social economy? As the phrenologists tell us that they think God has placed the moral powers *over* all the intellectual and social qualities; so in the order of nature, religion, be it Christian or heathen religion, is *over* the social and political systems. It is not, and cannot be, under, or on a level with, the state and social forces. It is, has been, and will be, *over* it. And if its ministers come down and attempt to reverse this order, they and the people are inevitably plunged beneath a rising refluent wave of retribution that cannot stay its course. The essential laws of the Church and her ministry are as eternal in their penalties on the Church, and all beneath the Church in society, as any general law in the realm of nature.*

We do not consider these evils as *all*-pervading, but as *prevailing* to an extent that is ominous and threatening. The large and devoted body of the Methodist Church among us has re-

* In four of the lower wards of this city there are 62,000 inhabitants, and now only nine churches! The removals "up-town" have not been under the Roman Catholic or Methodist regimen, under which the working men have not thus been robbed of their churches. In these removals, a few rich men and their wives controlled the funds of the churches, and invested them in new churches near the steps of their own doors "up-town." Had the ministry been in their appointed position, under any sort of canon law, they would have done better by the poor; and this disgraceful mal-appropriation of religious investments could not have occurred. Let the ministry, as a *body*, determine such cases, and *control* such funds. Do you say, "they cannot be trusted?" What! What *class* of men, then, can be trusted?

The poor fare best, after all, in the hands of the ministry.

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tained in great efficiency much of the canonical spirit; and God seems to bless them above other denominations. From them, under God, we hope for much. Other denominations might, if they would, learn an important lesson, were they to attend a little to the nature and present tendencies of Methodism both here and in England. If individuals among them "fall away," their *churches* never "fall away." In apostolic language, their "good remains." I can only stop to mention here that the ministry are in a false position to the Secular Press; and that from this arises another active agency of evil among us.

But I must proceed to mention a

4. Indication of national decay. What shall we say then of that Sad and Sable Curse which sore defaced the infant ere yet it had entered the family of nations—a pagan importation which has already cost many a violent struggle to the country? The influences of the institution of slavery are not confined to one portion only of the country. They spread themselves on the commerce, politics, and the general sentiments of the whole nation. Every sensible man north and south knows that there is danger here. The Constitution of the United States may hold together the various States in federal unity. I hope it may. But the curse will fall and strike what is more precious to every man and every family, than even the National Constitution. Alas, the curse is already out and doing its work. The general obtuseness of the public conscience, north and south, and at the seat of government, respecting the *present* operations and tendencies of slavery, is a demonstration of this curse, to any man whose moral sense remains to control his thinking and his opinions. Besides, we are *ashamed* of it before the civilized nations. And shame, without amendment, is always enervating and producing self-contempt. Self-respect, if not itself a virtue, is at, or under, the foundation of *all* virtue, personal and national. But the arm that waves, from our loftiest eminence, our glorious stars and stripes, trembles under the abash of enlightened compunction.

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He who sits down to *discuss* the essential injustice of this institution of American slavery is not one for whom we now write.

The evil is all-pervading and terrible. It has forced itself on every mind and heart among us. I therefore simply introduce it here as one of the most obvious and direct causes of national decay that could possibly have been suffered to take root and grow up, blighting, in its dismal darkness, all that is fresh, and fair, and lovely in the garden of freedom. God help us!

Passing by other causes of national dissolution, I shall mention

5. *The equivocal or irreligious character of the civil authorities.* I shall not stop to inquire here whether these authorities are a true representation, morally and religiously, of their constituents, which might lead to discouraging trains of thought. In the nature of things it must needs be that they who are invested, either by the sword or by the suffrage of the people, with the functions of civil authority of *any* nation, are transcendently influential for transcendent good or evil. But do you say it is a small honor, and often none whatever, to hold any eminent station under this government? Sad omen!—if it be so. But honored or not, his position is yet solemn and eventful. He cannot send back to the people his powers, if he would. They are his own, and personal, in the necessity of the case. Now, if there is any truth in history, it is most true that the Almighty, through unvarying general laws (not always cognizable to mere man) often brings sad and bewildering judgments on nations which are caused, or at least occasioned, by the sin of their public rulers. This, I say, is of the nature of a historical *fact.* This being the case, his religious responsibility is most conspicuous; and that, too, whether the people who confer on him this power think so or not. Under the most extended distribution of power known to any government, a single individual, by a single act, assumed the consequences of the late disgraceful and sanguinary war with Mexico, when his *one vote* unsheathed the sword of state. Whether, therefore, his office may be honored or despised by many, it is intrinsically efficient in pro-

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ducing often the most beneficial or the most calamitous results, and that on a mighty scale. What a momentous alternative, then, is forced upon a nation in the religious or irreligious character of its civil rulers!

What disaster, if they shall refuse to prostrate themselves at the feet of Him—the Christ—by whom kings reign!—if they shall refuse to acknowledge the everlasting Son, and explicitly profess his name before men, and obey Him in His holy Gospel! What fearful lessons in the past, of those rulers who, under the power of Ambition, or the spell of Mammon, have "set themselves," and taken counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed! "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings [rulers]; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little."

From the nature—not the necessity—of the case, each nation generally rates its own public men on illusory grounds; just as each under-graduate of a college often rates such or such a professor of his Alma Mater to be the "first in the country," in his department. To free us from this sure tendency to error, we must earnestly and candidly look at the statesmen of other countries and other times, and familiarize our minds with the various exemplifications of the true standard of public official character abounding in the Word of God.

The Constitution and Laws of the United States, though pervaded, as I said before, with ideas and institutes peculiar to Christianity, are still, at best, only "almost Christian." The nation, therefore, *as a nation*, refuses in its own capacity, to confess Christ. Do not be startled, my friends. Let us be candid, and think and speak as if we took our stand-point on some sister planet, and contemplated these dirty little spots on this mother earth, called "countries." How many errors, political and religious, are abroad on the earth! How many nations, greatly enlightened, have suffered and pined away under two or three great generic *delusions!* I submit, therefore, to the com-

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mon sense of all sensible and intelligent Christians, reading the Scriptures, that the obligations of nations, as such, to call themselves by His (Christ's) name, and to submit to His authority, is of the same nature, and equally imperative, with the obligations of families or individuals to do the same; and that the consequences of neglect or contempt of these obligations, are as direct and ruinous in their *nature* on all these corporate or national functions and functionaries. It follows, therefore, by *necessary* consequence, that if the religious character of the rulers of this country is either equivocal or wanting, an effect goes forth, not only in, through or by, their official acts, but under and over, before and after, and aside from, those official acts.

Now, on points so delicate, where *character*, private or public, is the theme, words should be few. It is only in their public acts, secular and *religious*, that rulers are properly responsible to their fellow-men. Even here, the right mind abstains from pursuing the case. But where all are immediately affected by a course of public official conduct which is indisputably and overtly wrong and ruinous to Society, *any* one—and especially the preacher—may "cry aloud and spare not."

In the rudest forms of society—and much more so in the advanced—the state *unavoidably* assumes, and is charged with, interests most momentous to the individual. These vital interests unavoidably depend on the wisdom, discretion, and *religious* integrity of the living functionary. Is not the *religious* character, then, of the civil ruler, a vital affair in the destiny of any nation? I submit, therefore, whether the irreligious character of very many of our public rulers—their refusal openly to profess Christ, the King of kings, in their *official* capacity—is not a complicate *indignity* offered to Him before whom angels bow, and archangels veil their faces? And shall an indignity so flagrant, escape the notice of Him who declares Himself "*Governor amongst the nations*"? Is this "cant"?—"Cant"! I challenge the intelligence of mankind to the question. I appeal to the experience of nations—their histories—the brief cycles of their infancy, pupilage, glory, and dark decadence. What! a Chris-

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tian *people*, and a *Government* denying Christ! A Government lifting its head among the nations, boasting independence, and yet mute and gagged for FEAR of a handful of Jews and professed infidels living under the vine and fig-tree of the Christian heritage! But I must pass, and point you, for a moment, to several manifestations of the *equivocal* or irreligious character of many of our rulers: viz.,

(1.) *The sad moral forfeiture often made in rising into official power.* Let me only ask, why is it that thousands of candidates for office, shouting independence, do, nevertheless, meanly barter away their *conscience*, to catch the popular vote? How would the high-minded patriots of the Revolution turn away in disdain from the contemptible cabals of our politicians bowing down to dissipated rabbles, and doling out their wealth to purchase their election? It requires no prophet's eye—no special acumen—to foresee the general results of such shameful vices, but it requires some degree of *moral sensibility*—more than statesmen generally possess.

(2.) What are we to think of another tendency among our rulers, and its influence on this whole question? What are we to think of an intelligent American citizen—reading history—who descends far—very far—down a dismal descent, till we see him basely prostrated, asking for "votes"—for "votes!"—at the feet of that idolatrous Monster of political and church power, stalking the earth for twelve hundred years, and breathing corruption from her horrid breath, in the ear of States? Here, at this low level, do we find the skulking hypocrite who but yesterday declaimed in bar-rooms, on "Church and State!" "Church and State!" Nay—votes! votes! votes!

(3.) Let me point you to another very significant manifestation of irreligion among our public rulers: viz.—*The open violation of the Fourth Commandment.* This (I can only here say briefly) extends over the various departments, legislative, judicial, executive, military, naval, and diplomatic. With all the startling vices and social disorders of Sabbath-breaking countries, lying open on the *surface* of the political world, how many of our reading, intelligent statesmen are found on the Sabbath, crowding

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